

# **Steps to Implement a Successful Buy Recycled Program**

## **Implementing a Successful Buy Recycled Program**

A successful buy recycled program within any agency contains many elements. The results can vary considerably depending on the size of the agency, how it is organized, and whether purchasing is centralized. Access to online purchasing and tracking systems and the commitment to meeting the buy recycled mandates (Public Contract Code sections 12200–12320) also play a part.

## **Adopt a Policy**

Adopting an agencywide policy is often enough to break through many barriers and provide the opportunity for recycled-content products (RCP) to prove themselves. A buy recycled policy will increase awareness of the mandates and requirements related to RCP procurement. It will also allow staff to address agencywide commitment and resource allocation needs. Adoption of a policy involves upper-level management and raises awareness about RCPs at all levels.

## **Develop a Buy Recycled Team**

A buy recycled team formed to meet RCP procurement requirements should include a high-level procurement official and cross-divisional staff. Those who place the orders should be involved—along with the procurement officers reviewing the purchase orders—to make sure all reportable purchases are noted. Staff in the contracts and legal offices should review all contract and bid documents to ensure that buy recycled language is included. Upper-level management should lead the team to provide policy direction.

## **Upper Management Support**

To ensure the success of a buy recycled program, an agency will need to have sufficient staff to do the job. Usually, an upper-level manager has the best success in overseeing the agency's buy recycled activities and goals. A manager has the authority to mobilize resources and commitment from throughout the agency and to coordinate the buy recycled team.

## **Must Have a “Can Do” Commitment**

A “can do” commitment from all buy recycled team members can be contagious throughout the agency. Staff members are more likely to help their agency succeed in its commitment if they know their management believes in the benefits and advantages of a buy recycled program.

## **Develop an Automated Tracking System**

An agencywide system must be in place for an agency to accurately identify, track, and document all reportable purchases. Both RCPs and non-RCPs must be included in order to submit a complete and accurate State Agency Buy Recycled Campaign (SABRC) annual report.

An automated tracking system would require one or all of the following:

- Revising internal forms to capture specific information from purchase orders.
- Modifying CalSTARS object codes.
- Creating a database or spreadsheet application using software like Microsoft Excel or Access.
- Developing a custom-designed computer application to capture all purchases.
- Electronic reporting of purchases directly from product suppliers.

- All RCP tracking must minimally be capturing product ID#(s); total recycled content (TRC); postconsumer content (PC); which SABRC category applies; total purchase dollars; and RCP dollars.

## Share Information

Educating staff on RCPs is critical to a successful program. Many RCPs have improved over the years, but a poor experience 10 years ago may still cause apprehension among staff members. They need to hear about advancements in RCPs, and agencies need to share information with each other. Management needs the ability to network among the buy recycled team members. Buyers need to communicate with suppliers, and the buy recycled team members should inform product manufacturers of their RCP preferences and needs.

## Provide Adequate Resources

As with any program, success depends on assignment of adequate resources to attain the stated goals and objectives of the program. In order to implement a successful buy recycled program, the following resources are typically necessary:

- Upper-management commitment and involvement to lead the buy recycled team.
- Knowledgeable and interested lead staff.
- Internal training and communication of RCP procurement preferences.
- Computer resources with Internet access.
- Any automated procurement tracking system.
- Allocation for staff training and travel.

## Annually Evaluate Your Program

Analyze past purchases with respect to product performance, price, delivery, and user satisfaction.

This information is useful in developing an RCP procurement history.

Each member of the team—management, buyers, users, and those tracking the purchases—must analyze their own past purchases to determine how they can increase RCP purchases in the future. A periodic review will prevent future mistakes and will establish purchasing practices that include RCPs.

Buy recycled team members should consult suppliers for their insight on increasing RCP procurement. They should also convey their agency's commitment to obtaining RCPs to the product suppliers.

## Use CIWMB as a Resource

The CIWMB Buy Recycled Section staff is available to provide you with any assistance you may need for your buy recycled program. The Buy Recycled Web site ([www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BuyRecycled/](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BuyRecycled/)) provides a wide variety of buy recycled resources and information, including but not limited to:

- **The SABRC Training Manual.** Includes definitions of terms, forms, and procedures for State agencies.
- **Training/Workshops.** Regularly scheduled events (specialized training available upon request).
- **Online RCP database.** Includes thousands of products and suppliers and links to their Web sites free of charge.
- **Sample policies and contract language.** Examples of documents that you can download and modify for your own use.

Contact CIWMB's Buy Recycled Section staff at (916) 341-6486 or (916) 341-6470.

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